

47th District – **Special Report and Update**

Representative Jack Cairnes



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For the people of the 47th District

***Auburn, Black Diamond,
Covington, Kent, King County,
Maple Valley, and Renton.***

Dear Citizens of the 47th District,

It seems that the Legislature just completed the 2001 session, but it is already time to get ready to head back to Olympia. During this past session, my colleagues and I worked on issues that are very important to our community, as well as to our county and state. I see these issues, particularly transportation, education, public safety, growth, and economic stability, continuing to dominate our discussions in the 2002 session. Legislators must continually monitor these topics and improve policies year in and year out. There are no quick fixes, despite what you may hear so often in the news media.

For example, there is no silver bullet that we can use to solve our transportation problems. In fact, without thoroughly examining all options, we could easily take steps backwards. A highly touted idea could easily spend our precious tax dollars while providing little or no relief. This is what we saw happen with the light rail plan, and is what I believe could occur if the Legislature passed the currently proposed regional plan. In this newsletter, you will see further discussion on transportation, as well as on other topics that I believe are important to us both. I have also included a brief survey to help me further gauge your current opinions.

I see many of you out in the community and I have appreciated meeting with individual citizens and various groups. If you have questions or would like to talk to me, please do not hesitate to write, call or send an e-mail message. I enjoy hearing from you—your input makes me a better representative.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jack Cairnes

Special Report and Update

Transportation Update: Regional Plan's Effects on 47th District

Simply put, the regional plan under discussion would have a negative impact on the 47th District. The regional taxing plan is another good example of 'choice' locations receiving all the benefits. In its current form it remains unfavorable to cities, counties, taxpayers and commuters who live outside the four or five chosen sites. We would be stuck with the bill while receiving little benefit.

The regional projects currently mentioned include: replacing the Alaskan Way viaduct with an underground tunnel, a 'new and improved' 520 bridge, improvements to Highway 509, the 167/405 interchange, and widening the I-5 lanes through Bellevue. I don't dispute these are important projects to the state, but the billions in ex-

pense would cause other transportation needs to be sacrificed.

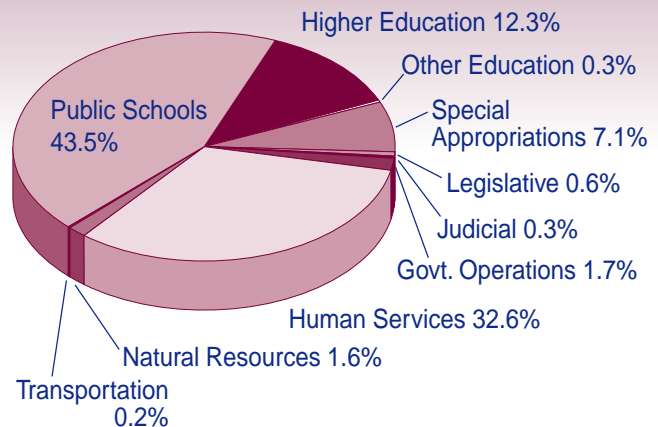
These projects would impose an enormous tax increase, possibly several hundred dollars a year per person, with little or no congestion relief in the 47th District. The Maple Valley Highway, Kent-Kangley Road, Benson Hill Road, Old Cemetery Road, the Petrovsky Road and many others would be placed on the back burner under the regional plan, as it stands now.

In my view, this regional plan takes our money and leads us in the wrong direction – backwards. Therein lies the battle I will keep fighting for resident and taxpayers of the 47th District.

Budget snapshot 2001-03

The 2001-03 general fund budget totals \$22.8 billion. However, the level of spending in the budget combined with declining revenues, according to some analysts, will result in a deficit of close to \$1 billion.

Putting politics aside, state lawmakers will need to come together in the coming months to bring this budget back into balance and make it sustainable over the long term without increasing taxes. We must look for creative solutions to increase productivity, streamline services and assist people and businesses in our state. It's vitally important that we prioritize and protect the fundamental concerns of our state, such as education and public safety.



Approximately 43.5 percent of the \$22.8 billion general fund budget goes toward K-12 education – an area lawmakers would rather not cut. The governor has asked seven of the largest state agencies to prepare contingency cuts of 15 percent from their budgets. The agencies he's targeted for cuts include the departments of Social and Health Services, Corrections, Community Development, Health, Ecology, and Fish and Wildlife, as well as the Office of Trade and Economic Development.

I was pleased to hear the governor say that the budget will be brought back into balance without raising taxes.

Special Report to Seniors

Progress for seniors in the state budget

As a legislator, I am considered a “fiscal conservative.” In other words, I believe government should wisely spend the hard-earned money of taxpayers. I also believe that government must make tough choices and set priorities. And one of state government’s top priorities must be helping senior citizens.

Meeting the long-term care needs of seniors was an important part of the state operating budget the Legislature passed this year. There are many victories for seniors in the budget, including:

- Funding to increase nursing services for individuals living in their own homes.
- A wage increase for long-term care workers.
- Funding to increase the average daily nursing home rate by nearly 10 percent.
- Funding to pay higher rates to boarding homes that provide specialized dementia services.
- Authorization to develop two Medicaid waiver programs to serve Medically Needy individuals in home and community settings.

Making long-term care a leading priority

I am deeply concerned about the number of seniors in our community who are not receiving the long-term care they so desperately need. I know the importance of long-term care and will continue to fight for seniors in Olympia.

The Legislature did make significant progress this session to strengthen Washington’s long-term care program. Key legislation that passed included:

- SB 5184, to help prevent abuse, authorized the Aging and Adult Services Administration (AASA) to share the results of Adult Protective Services investigations to prospective employers of caregivers.
- SHB 1426 authorized AASA to send quality improvement consultants into boarding homes to facilitate “resident-centered” care.
- HB 1341 expanded access and controls costs for those who otherwise have no alternatives to nursing home placements.
- SHB 1320 required adult family home providers and newly hired resident managers to have at least a high school diploma or GED, as well as meet other education and health requirements. This will improve quality of care and safety in residential settings.

Protecting citizens from identity theft

Identity theft can destroy a person’s good name and credit, and it’s reaching epidemic proportions in the Puget Sound area. It is both sad and personally devastating, but seniors are increasingly the victims of identity theft. Statewide, it is one of the few crimes that increased last year, and Washington is consistently ranked among the top five states nationwide for this crime.

I am making every effort in the Legislature to fight back against identity thieves. In 1999, lawmakers established the crime of identity theft. Then in May of this year, we approved legislation expanding the definition of identity theft, and placing additional restrictions on collection agencies and credit reporting agencies.

This is only a beginning. I introduced a proposal to create an identity theft bureau within the Washington State Patrol to track down and prosecute crooks, as well as assist the victims of identity theft. This was held up in 2001, but I am ready with a coalition of law enforcement personnel to introduce the issue in January.

I'd like to hear from you.

What are your ideas and opinions on the upcoming legislative session? Please take a moment to fill out this brief survey. You can e-mail your responses to cairnes_ja@leg.wa.gov or mail the survey to the following address: Rep. Jack Cairnes, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600

1. Of these vital issues, what do you believe is the most critical issue facing our state? Please rank in order of importance from a high of 1 to a low of 8.

- _____ Public schools
- _____ Property taxes
- _____ Government regulation
- _____ Transportation system
- _____ Energy and utility issues
- _____ Budget
- _____ Washington business climate
- Public safety

2. Do you believe certain state programs are "off limits" to budget cuts?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, which ones: _____

3. Do you support Gov. Locke's transportation funding proposal and tax increases, including a 9 cent-per-gallon gas tax increase, a new 2% auto and truck sales tax, an increase in the weight-mile tax on trucks and recreational vehicles, and a 12 cent-per-gallon increase in the diesel fuel tax?

_____ Yes _____ No

Comments: _____

4. Who should decide whether we have any new user fees or taxes for transportation in our state?

_____ Legislative referendum to the people
_____ The Legislature

Comments: _____

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